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RULING TOMORROW IN SECURITY CASE

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State Department to Decide on Charges Against Otepka

By C. P. TRUSELL

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 21—

State Department said today that a decision would be made Wednesday on whether charges against Otto F. Otepka would be pressed or dropped.

Mr. Otepka, a State Department security officer, has been charged with giving confidential data to J. G. Sourwine, chief counsel of the Senate Internal Security subcommittee.

The department's announcement came after Secretary of State Dean Rusk had attended a two-hour closed session of the subcommittee at which the case of Mr. Otepka was discussed.

Also after the meeting with Mr. Rusk, Senator Thomas J. Dodd, vice chairman of the investigating panel, made a spirited defense of Mr. Otepka. He said pursuit of charges by the department would be considered by the subcommittee "tantamount to a continued prohibition on collaboration with the subcommittee by State Department employees."

The department declined to comment on Senator Dodd's statement.

Mr. Otepka asked the department on Oct. 14 in a 12-page formal answer to dismiss 13 charges of violation of regulation.

If the decision is "adverse," a department spokesman explained, Mr. Otepka will be called to stand hearings. A "favorable" decision, it was added, would result in a dropping of the case.

In the background is the case of William A. Wieland, a State Department expert on Caribbean affairs, who was found by the Senate subcommittee last year to have been deficient in "integrity and general suitability" for his role in the department's intelligence assessment of Premier Fidel Castro in Cuba. President Kennedy and other high Administration officials defended Mr. Wieland.

Mr. Otepka said in his reply to the disciplinary charges that he had been "both shocked and

amazed" at the performance of his superiors in the security office since 1960. His own role as a witness before the subcommittee, he said, had been "after working hours" to discuss alleged "conflicts" in testimony given by his superior, John F. Reilly.

Appointments Defended

The Reilly testimony concerned security clearances of appointments to the State Department's Advisory Committee on International Organizations. Mr. Otepka defended the appointments.

He implied that Mr. Reilly had suggested that a certain security evaluation, unidentified, disqualify himself from further consideration of the Wieland case.

In presenting his testimony to Mr. Sourwine, Mr. Otepka said, he gave the counsel various "exhibits" from departmental files that had been classified as "confidential." He insisted, however, that none of the data were investigative and he held, therefore, that he had not violated the "spirit" of the security regulations.

He said he had also given Mr. Sourwine documents labeled "for official use only," to illustrate a point he was seeking to make.

Late today Senator Dodd, a Connecticut Democrat, issued a statement from his office. He said that he believed that it reflected the "collective thinking" of the whole investigative panel.

"I consider Mr. Otepka an outstanding public servant," he said, "and I believe this assessment is confirmed by his efficiency ratings over the years, his record of promotion, his receipt of an award for specially meritorious service, and by his conscientious performance."

"Mr. Otepka has been an honest witness before the subcommittee in its examination of the case of William Arthur Wieland, former head of the Caribbean desk at the Department of State, and of matters relating to State Department security in general," he added.